

# Drum

## Tom-Toms

In keeping with the concept of sound clarity, all the toms in the kit are fitted with RIMS mounts, even the "floor" toms. This particular kit was mated with a Collarlock L-arm Bar System. (For more info on the Collarlock rack, refer to my July '89 review.) There are no mufflers in any of the drums, nor any holder-mount holes drilled.

The 8" tom has four lugs per side, the 10" and 12" have six lugs each per side, and the 14" and 16" drums have eight lugs each per side. All five toms were fitted with coated *Ambassador* batters and clear *Ambassador* bottoms. The coated heads muted the attack a little, but the drums were clear and resonant. (I prefer *Pinstripe* batters on power toms.) The sound was warm and round, as expected, and the drums could be tuned to deeper pitches and still retain good response.

DW's drums are sensitive to tuning; just a touch of the tuning rods changed pitch. If you're ultra-critical of your tunings, you'll appreciate that the drums will take minute variables instantly and easily.

## Snare Drums

The 7x14 snare that came with the kit also has a six-ply maple shell with reinforcing hoops, along with ten double-ended lugs and one venthole. A 20-strand wire snare unit is attached to the strainer by wide fiberglass tape strips. DW's cross-throw style throwoff has the usual fine-tune knob, plus a rubber-coated lever for positive gripping. The strainer wisely has drumkey-operated screws at both the throw-off and butt-end clamps. (I can't tell you the number of times I've chewed up slotted screws on snare strainers.) Using square-head screws also enables more torque to be applied with the drumkey to firmly clamp the connecting strips. The "less is more" concept applies here, as the whole setup is no-nonsense and works efficiently.

DW's snare bed is not an immediate cut into the shell, but rather a gradual taper of over two inches. This seems to allow the head to seat more comfortably without being upset by a radical dip in the bearing edge.

Fitted with a coated *Ambassador* batter and half of a plastic O-ring taped to the head, this drum had a masterful sound. It was sensitive to soft playing and didn't choke under loud volume. The sound was typically woody and warm, making the drum a pleasure to play.

I also got to check out two other DW snares: a 6 1/2x14 Black Chrome brass model, and a 4x14 brass piccolo. Both



Photo by Rick Mattingly

Drum Workshop, widely acclaimed for their drum pedals, are also producing hand-crafted "Made In U.S.A." acoustic drumkits of classic design. Their shells are six-ply maple, with six-ply maple reinforcing hoops, top and bottom. Since the plys are thin, the drums are relatively lightweight, and resonate at a higher fundamental. The interiors are lacquered with only a fine mist, and the drums all have expertly formed 45° bearing edges. DW uses the old circular Camco-style lugs, which do have springs, but they pack the lugs with foam insulate to lessen spring vibration and chatter.

DW's drums are all "timbre matched," meaning each drum in the kit is matched musically to the others. This concept is so precise that just by tapping the shells, you can hear the approximate note each drum wants to be tuned to (which helps you find the "sweet spot" more readily). It's also quite possible to specify low-timbre or high-timbre shells when ordering. What this all means is that DW is producing *musical* instruments that all blend together, matching the shell timbres in a drumkit to sound in a descending scale.

Components of the DW kit I tested were: a 16x24 bass drum, 8x8, 9x10, and 10x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 suspended

floor toms, and a 7 x 14 snare.

## Bass Drum

The bass drum has ten lugs per side, and uses the common T-handle/claw tuners, except at the bottom, where key rods replace the T-handles. The drum hoops are wooden and are high-gloss lacquered to match the shell finish. Externally mounted spurs are used (they don't pass through the drum), and these use a T-screw locking method with a preset forward angle notch and another preset notch for folding flush to the shell. The spurs have telescopic inner legs and convertible rubber/spike tips. They're not too massive, and hold the drum in position just fine.

The drum came fitted with a Remo clear batter and an *Ebony* front head. There is no muffling in the drum—not even a felt strip—and due to the sheer size of this drum, it definitely needed something to dampen its inherent boom. A thicker batter head (a *Pinstripe*) helped flatten the sound, and the blanket I placed in the bottom of the drum served to tighten up the tone, giving good punch, depth, and volume. I'm not a real big fan of 24" power bass drums, but this one had a certain roundness and warmth I liked.



# Workshop Drumkit

by Bob  
Saydlowski, Jr.

have ten double-ended lugs and the identical strainer as the wooden drum. The piccolo snare was extremely cutting and snappy; I guess the best word is "alive." It gave a nice pop and an undistorted, tight tonality. The 6 1/2" Black Chrome was not as ringy as other metal drums I've played; in fact, it possessed a pleasant brilliance. The sound was tight and crisp, while the drum itself was totally responsive. I actually preferred this drum's sound over the other two, mostly because of its added high-end over the wood model, and its general tonal qualities, which would befit many musical styles, making it a good "work-horse" drum.

## Hardware

DW's 9500 snare stand has a double-braced tripod base and a memory lock at the height tube. Its basket is mounted on a knurled steel rod, which will move horizontally several inches to position the basket (and drum) away from the body of the stand. Angle adjustment is done via a universal joint, which moves the basket mount in various directions, similar to a ball joint. At the bottom of the basket is a large, tri-cornered knob that adjusts a rotating sleeve, which in turn adjusts the clamping of the basket to the drum. DW uses a large, fiberglass-reinforced handle to lock the angle setting. The handle is spring-loaded, and can be pulled away from the stand a fraction of an inch to disengage the ratchet gears. This let me turn the handle to a different position in relation to the drum without affecting my angle setting. The stand is certainly sturdy, and affords many angles. Alone, the stand retails at \$149.00.

The *Turbo* 55007 hi-hat is unique in that it features a rotating base and a removable third leg, allowing more space for multiple pedal setups. (The legs are all double-braced.) The stand's pedal has a support plate underneath with *Velcro* attached, while the base of the frame has two sliding spur rods, released with a drumkey. A flat wheel at the frame base allows tension adjustment of the internal spring, and linkage is a direct-pull chain. The action is ultra-smooth and noise-free. Unlike some others, it worked *with* me instead of against me.

In its two-leg configuration, the stand remains stable (if balanced correctly)—but not as much as with the third leg attached, of course. Playing heel-down anchored the stand better when using the two-leg format; a rocking heel-to-toe technique caused more wobble in the stand. (I imagine an adaptor could be used to clamp the hi-hat to a cymbal stand, rack, or left bass drum

to aid stability.) Even with the third leg in place, the rotatable base freed up space for a double bass pedal foot-board at the right of the hi-hat quite comfortably. The stand retails for \$189.00.

DW's *Control* 9700 cymbal stand has a double-braced tripod, and is dual-purpose: It can be either a straight stand or boom. The boom arm can disappear into the top height tube—creating a straight stand—or it can remain out for use as a traditional boom. There are two adjustable-height tiers (three if the boom is telescoped into the stand, making a monstrously high stand of almost seven feet tall if fully expanded!), and both tiers have inner nylon bushings and memory locks fitted to the tubes.

The cymbal tilter gear is toothless, allowing micronic adjustments. Like the snare stand, it has a large handle for locking, which can be disengaged and rotated to keep out of the way of the cymbal. Another feature of the stand is found at the cymbal mount cup, which is unique to DW. The tilter post is threaded to accommodate a rotating sleeve that rides up the post, locking in place with a drum key to adjust the space between the two felt washers. The cymbal can't be tightened down excessively this way (good), and the "play" can be adjusted (better!). The stand is rather expensive (\$198.00), but it's ingeniously engineered and incredibly sturdy.

DW's popular *Turbo* 5002CX double bass



Photo by Rick Mattingly



Photo by Rick Mattingly

drum pedal continues to be refined. I originally reviewed the pedal back in October 1983, and since that time, all adjustments are now drum key-operated, the connector has been changed to an inner oil-flow universal joint, and the support plates are a bit different. In general, it's even better than it was before, and that was hard to top! The 5002CX is the king of double pedals—smooth, precise, and reliable.

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# DENNIS CHAMBERS

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elements add a dimension of tension to this disc, and are evident from the first cut, the Nana/Don Cherry composition "Bird Boy," where the mid-tempo percussion groove is accentuated by Gohl's booming thunder-like keys. On the next track, "Anarrie/Rain Dance," simple shakers play against a stark snare drum.

Though it's likely that strong grooving is going to be present on a Vasconcelos recording, that's far from the sole attraction of *Rain Dance*. Each cut concerns itself with melody, structure, and lots of dynamics. Nana's vocals also make several appearances, allowing these cuts to be fairly termed "songs." And Nana's penchant for lots of different styles keeps things interesting. A good example of this is the 7 1/2-minute Trilok Gurtu collaboration, "Pasha Love," a jazzy piece with flowing dynamic peaks and valleys, funky bass line, and scary vocals.

Beyond the grooves, melodies, and inspired arrangements, though, what really makes *Rain Dance* shine is the pure joy that practically leaps out from each cut. It's easy to tell that Nana loves his work, and that can't help but come out on his recordings.

—Adam Budofsky



## Cosmetics

DW's logo badges are circular (to complement the lug design) and have serial numbers imprinted. The kit I tested was finished in a burnt orange high-gloss polyester lacquer. It was so glossy, I thought it was a covering. Unlike plastic coverings, polyester-based lacquer finishes don't interfere with the drums' resonance, and are ten times harder than normal acrylic lacquers. Twenty-seven colors are available in either solid high-gloss, brilliant metallic, or Mira metalflake, as well as various colored transparent finishes. Add to that natural wood grains, sunbursts, prismatic, and sparkle lacquers and DW offers over 100 finishes. (They'll also do custom colors and combinations via special order.) The finishes are hand-applied and hand-polished. Along with the hand-sanding of the shells, these methods allow DW to turn out individual instruments, rather than just churning drums out as quickly as possible.

The seven drums alone, with the RIMS mounts, retail at \$4,413.00—definitely not cheap. But DW is concentrating on making only quality, top-of-the-line drums, and they've certainly accomplished this. This is a pro kit without a doubt, keeping all the little details just as important as the major features (one of which is a six-year warranty). We were on the waiting list for a long time to get a test kit, due to the demand for the drums—and now I can see (and hear) why. The wait was worth it.



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